

MARCH 2026

SPRING NEWSLETTER

Sunnyside Valley Irrigation District

Preparing for 2026: Water, Drought, and what it means for Growers

After three consecutive drought years, planning ahead matters more than ever. This spring newsletter highlights water outlooks, fallowing opportunities, and system investments designed to support SVID growers.

SVID mailing list launch!



SVID is excited to announce the launch of a new email mailing list designed to keep you better informed throughout the year. **Future issues of the SVID newsletter will be delivered exclusively in digital format** through this new service. This change allows the District to share timely updates, important notices, and seasonal information more efficiently and more often—making it easier for water users to stay informed. To learn more and sign up today, please visit svid.org.



PVC Pipe being installed during winter construction



This issue:



A look back at the 2025 Water Year

December flooding: why additional storage matters

2026 Water Supply Outlook & Drought Updates

2026 SVID Fallowing Program: what growers need to know

Frequently asked questions Front Office

Message from the Manager

2026 Fallowing Program: What you need to know

The 2026 SVID Fallowing Program is going live in March!

SVID has partnered with the Department of Ecology and Trout Unlimited to offer a voluntary fallowing-based water transfer program for the 2026 water year.

Approved participants will receive **\$350 per acre-foot**, with total compensation expected to range from \$800 to \$1,000 per acre due to the program's early launch.

Participation is reviewed on a case-by-case basis to ensure no adverse impacts to SVID operations or water deliveries. Additionally to be eligible, landowners must meet the following:

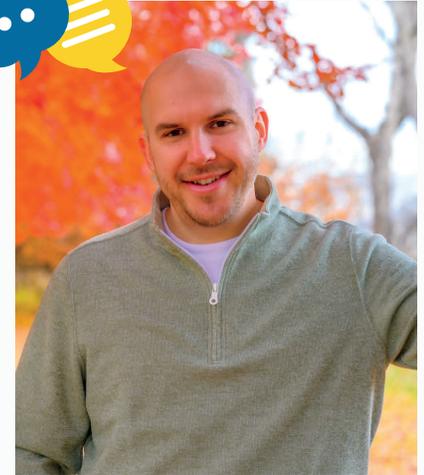
- A 3-acre minimum to participate
- All land in the program must be fallowed - no alternative sources of water can be used to irrigate the land for the 2026 water year.
- The land must have been irrigated or fallowed in the previous water year.
- The parcels assessments must be paid in full before a transfer can proceed.

Landowners interested in participating should contact the SVID Engineering office to request program information and confirm eligibility. **Interest in this program will be high, so early communication is strongly encouraged.**



SVID Crews preparing PVC pipe for installation

Message from the Manager



The 2025 Irrigation season was one of the most challenging in decades, marking a third consecutive drought in the Yakima Basin. Water shortages, curtailments, and economic pressures created real difficulties for growers across the valley.

Despite these challenges, SVID's focus remains unchanged: providing reliable service and practical planning for our landowners. Through tools like the fallowing program and continued system improvements, we are working to manage risk and support agriculture in the Sunnyside Valley. Thank you for your continued engagement and support.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "David E. Johnson".



A look back at the 2025 Water Year

Conditions entering the 2025 season were already dry, following consecutive drought years. As the season progressed, water supply forecasts steadily declined due to:

- Below-average snowpack and precipitation
- Reduced runoff into reservoirs
- High summer temperatures increased irrigation demand

While water supply conditions vary year to year, 2025 highlighted the challenges of managing a limited water supply during extended drought. SVID continues to evaluate operations, forecasting methods, and long-term strategies to improve reliability during future dry years.

December Storm and Flood Impacts: What we saw

During the December storm event we experienced the **highest 5 day flow period on record** in the Yakima Basin which significantly improved our reservoir storage. River flows at Parker peaked just above 30,000 cfs compared to 58,000 cfs in February of 1996. While the Buruea of Reclamation (BOR) captured as much runoff as possible, about 85% of the basin does not drain through a reservoir and cannot be stored. Events like this emphasize why additional storage is such a critical need in the Yakima basin.



Peak flow over the Sunnyside Dam on December 11th 2025

Assessment and water service - Frequently asked questions

Why do I pay an irrigation assessment if I don't take water?

Irrigation assessments are not a charge for the water you use. They are a land-based assessment tied to the water right attached to the property and help fund construction, operation, and maintenance of the irrigation and drainage system

Is this unique to irrigation districts?

No. Assessments function similarly to other public charges that are tied to property or community benefit rather than individual use.

Do landowners who don't irrigate receive any benefit?

Yes. The system preserves water rights and provides critical drainage and flood conveyance that protects farms, roads, and communities throughout the valley.

Why do assessments increase?

Assessments reflect the actual cost of operating and maintaining a aging system, including labor, materials, regulatory requirements, and necessary infrastructure upgrades.



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Spring Newsletter

2025 Construction Highlights

SVID Staff have been busy this winter, accomplishing quite a few milestones as we prepare the irrigation system for another year.

Winter work by the numbers

- Miles of Pipe installed: 7 miles
- Pipe sizes: 4 inch to 30 inch
- Number of acres served: 1,125
- Flowmeters installed: 85
- Canals Lined: 800ft
- Pumps installed: 2

This work helps keep our irrigation system running smoothly year after year, supporting reliable water delivery and responsible stewardship of the land we all depend on.



SVID Crews working on a new pump station.

